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learned author seems to have the best of the argument. His knowledge is so encyclopædic that he can bring to his support an overwhelming array of facts, and he bears down his adversary by sheer weight of illustrative comparisons.

There are various types of art experts. A few years ago the iconoclasts seemed to have the field. They devoted themselves to proving that nobody ever did anything, and that the vast array of masterpieces attributed by tradition to the old masters were all the work of unknown pupils. Then there is the school of hero worshippers, who delight to take some man formerly considered of second rate importance, and by attributing to him every fine thing that might by any possibility have come from his brush or chisel, make of him one of the giants of art. Of this type of book Miss Cruttwell's recent work on Verrochio is a fair example. Dr. Bode belongs to neither school. His specialty is to increase the number of works attributed to the great masters. For example, it is generally supposed that no sculpture from Leonardo's hand has come down to us. Dr. Bode, however, thinks that he can identify four reliefs as the work of that supreme genius. It may be so. Indeed, he makes it seem at least very probable. This type of criticism is certainly far more interesting than that of the iconoclasts; and proceeding upon these lines in the acquisition of hitherto unrecognized masterpieces, Dr. Bode is making of the Museum at Berlin one of the world's most important collections.

The book is admirable; but it should have been entitled "Inquiries Touching the Authenticity and Authorship of Certain Works of Florentine Sculpture." Then it would be purchased only by those who are interested in such investigations.

G. B. R.

FEDRA. By Gabriele d'Annunzio. Milan: Fratelli Treves.

So great is d'Annunzio's fame that one turns to any book that he publishes with a certain interest; and with each succeeding volume the disappointment deepens. In our day we have witnessed the premature decay of more than one literary reputation. When Stephen Phillips produced *Marpessa* and

Paolo and Francesca it looked as if a star of the first magnitude had appeared above the horizon; but every year we have seen its brightness wane until now it is almost eclipsed. When d'Annunzio first began to publish his books, revealing a beauty of rhythmic diction hitherto unknown to Italian prose and scarcely equaled in any language, it seemed, too, that a genius of the first rank had come. He was a decadent of the decadents, but an artist in language such as the world has rarely seen. But when he took up the pen to write the infamous *Il Fuoco*, in which for a little gold he laid bare all the secrets of his amour with Duse, the gods forsook him. His style which had been as clear as a crystal brook and as melodious as Schubert's music, became tortured and involved. The reading of him, which had been such a delight, became a task. And, worst of all, the book was dull. Even its unsavory details do not lend interest to its pretentious emptiness.

Since then d'Annunzio has been going from bad to worse. In *La Figlia di Iorio* there was a momentary return of something of the old fire; but it was only a flash. Certainly *Fedra* will add nothing to his reputation. The Fratelli Treves have brought it out in sumptuous style; but the work of the printer cannot conceal the essential emptiness of the text.

After Euripides and Racine had handled so nobly the unhappy love of Phaedra for her husband's son, it required great courage for another to essay the theme, and only the ability to say something worth while could justify the venture. D'Annunzio has brought no new inspiration, no new thought. He only degrades and brutalizes the characters and robs them of our sympathy.

I know that there are a few who prefer the tortured diction of d'Annunzio's later works, with their archaic words and forced accentuations to the clear beauty of the earlier. They find in them a distinction which the others lack. There is no settling a dispute about tastes, and they may be right; but I confess I find it all a weariness of the flesh. There are people who pride themselves on a love for literature that is artificial and which makes no appeal to the great heart of humanity. Verily they find their reward in the later works of d'Annunzio; but to the ordinary mortal that reward seems to be dross and tinsel.

G. B. R.